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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -  
ROBERT PALLADINO  
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

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TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO TW

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: NORTH KOREA, CROSS-STRAIT  
RELATIONS

#### 11. North Korea

"[Taiwan] Must Not Overlook the Impact [Created] by  
Pyongyang Declaring That It Possesses Nuclear Weapons"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" commented in  
an editorial (2/14):

". Pyongyang's declaration [that it possess nuclear weapons], without doubt, indicates that the focus of the 'nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula' has pushed the previous argument over Pyongyang's ability to 'manufacture' nuclear weapons to [a new stage where the focus is] 'possession' of nuclear weapons. In other words, the message that Pyongyang sent to the world was that people no longer need to discuss whether North Korea needs to freeze its facilities that manufacture nuclear weapons. North Korea has, no matter how, succeeded in producing nuclear weapons and is thus basically a country in possession of nuclear weapons. The whole agenda for a meeting will be totally different even if the Six-Party talks resume in the future. .

". Even though it remains to be seen how the situation will further develop [on the Korean Peninsula], one thing can be sure: the move by Pyongyang has forced the other five countries involving in the Six-Party talks to adopt a unified position for the time being because the hawks in other countries have all started to criticize [Pyongyang]. It will not be too difficult for the United States to resolve the North Korean issue first before handling the Iran issue as long as it can get rid of the mud and dirt of Iraq. China, of course, will not be happy to have another bad neighbor that owns nuclear weapons and will thus increase its pressure on Pyongyang. Taiwan, on the other hand, should watch closely whether the whole new chess game will again lead to a re-organization of power in East Asia."

#### 12. Cross-Strait Relations

"Several Indicators to Monitor the Future of Cross-Strait Relations"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" editorialized (02/12):

". Monitoring cross-Strait relations after the Chinese New Year, [we can] possibly adopt a situational factor and three dynamic indicators. The so-called situational factor is the development of the U.S.-China relationship. After President George W. Bush got re-elected, it is easy to tell from the several policy directions proposed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that Washington has adjusted its policy toward China from that of strategic-competition to one that is more cooperative. On one hand, the United States is eager to pull itself out of the Iraqi quagmire, and it needs Beijing's cooperation on issues concerning Iran and North Korea. Under such a strategic environment, Washington, of course, will not allow incidents to occur across the Taiwan Strait. Over the past year, several issues caused by Taiwan's elections, such as the referendum, [plan to] institute a constitution, and the names-change plan, have unexpectedly helped to establish closer links between Washington and Beijing. Several behaviors by the Taipei authority have incrementally been interpreted by Washington as attempts to 'unilaterally change the status quo,' and Beijing has become used to pressuring Taipei diplomatically via the strength of Washington. The situational factor will likely continue in 2005. In other words, Washington and Beijing may have differences on several issues but they will further understand each other's positions with regard to the cross-Strait issue. The situational factor will further constrain Taiwan's space in the triangular relationship.

"Under the constraints of the macro situational factor, the three dynamic indicators we need to examine are: the legislative progress of [Beijing's] "anti-secession law," further negotiations on direct cross-Strait charter flights, and the possibility that a Taiwan delegation visits China, either one led by PFP Chairman James Soong or by Legislative Yuan President Wang Jin-pyng. ."

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